

MEDIA ADVISORY
September 11, 2002

Contact: Cory Fong
(701) 328-3660

JAEGER CERTIFIES NOVEMBER 5 GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT

Bismarck, ND - Secretary of State Al Jaeger has certified the ballot for the November 5, 2002 General Election ballot in North Dakota.

"On this day as we remember the tragedy that struck our nation a year ago and its many victims, I am reassured and feel right about doing something that underscores the strength and vitality of our great democracy and the many freedoms it preserves. Certifying the ballot today will give North Dakota citizens a chance to participate in one of our nation's most revered freedoms this fall – the freedom to cast a ballot, the freedom to make choices, the freedom to vote."

Jaeger's certification marks the beginning of an intense and detailed process of preparing election ballots by the state's county auditors. "Now that my office has certified the ballot," said Jaeger, "the real painstaking work begins for our state's county auditors who are ultimately responsible for printing the many different styles and versions of ballots for the up-coming November election. It is an intense time for them and they all do a great job under very constrained timelines."

North Dakota law requires Jaeger as Secretary of State to certify the names appearing on the ballot to the county auditors by the fifty-fifth day before the election, which is today. The certification is primarily a listing of the names of candidates who were nominated at the June primary election, independent candidates who may have filed prior to the September 6 filing deadline, and replacement candidates who were nominated by their political parties to fill existing vacancies.

According to Jaeger, now that the names of the candidates have been certified to the county auditors, ballots must be designed, proofed, finalized, and printed within a short, fifteen-day window of time so that absentee ballots can be made available to the public by the fortieth day before the election. "That date is quickly approaching on September 26," says Jaeger. "It is a very difficult deadline for our counties to meet."

Jaeger's certification includes the names of 226 candidates who will appear on county ballots across the state in November, including candidates for the United States Congress, Public Service Commissioner, and Justice of the Supreme Court who will appear on all ballots throughout the state. The certification also includes candidates for the various judicial districts, the legislature, and various county and special local district offices, including soil conservation.

Along with the listing of candidates, Jaeger provided the county auditors with the official ballot language for the three measures appearing on the November ballot. Voters will decide on two constitutional measures and one initiated statutory measure. Constitutional Measure No. 1 was

adopted and placed on the ballot by the 2001 Legislative Assembly and relates to tax exemptions for conservation and wildlife lands. Initiated Constitutional Measure No. 2, placed on the ballot as a result of petitions filed with Jaeger's office, would authorize the state to join a multi-state lottery. Initiated Statutory Measure No. 3, also resulting from petitions filed with the Secretary of State's office, would provide reimbursements and tax exemptions to North Dakotans under the age of thirty.

"Deciding on wording for the ballot language is important," says Jaeger, "especially in the case of these particular measures, which will likely attract very diverse interests and followers." Developing ballot language for the measures requires balancing the need to explain complex questions at a level that is understandable to everyone. As a part of finalizing the wording of the ballot language, the Secretary of State is required by law to consult with the Attorney General. "We take this responsibility very seriously," said Jaeger.

Of the 226 candidates included in Jaeger's certification, 145 are legislative candidates that were either nominated at the June primary or were substituted by the political parties to fill vacancies existing on the ballot. North Dakota law allows candidates to vacate offices after they are nominated in the June primary and before the general election candidate-filing deadline. As a result of 9 legislative vacancies in Democratic-NPL nominations, Jaeger's certification included 5 new Democratic-NPL legislative candidates. Four of the 9 will remain vacant for the general election in legislative districts 39 and 47, where Republican candidates for the house will go on the general election ballot without opposition.

Three legislative districts will have independent candidates on the ballot as well. In legislative district 3 (Minot), Russell Odegard and Kenneth Loughhead will appear on the ballot as independents for the house. Ron Lawler will appear as an independent candidate for the senate in legislative district 11 (Fargo). And, Roland Riemers will appear as an independent house candidate in district 43 (Grand Forks).

Complete listings of the candidates certified for the November 5 ballot along with the official ballot language for the measures appearing on the ballot are available on the Secretary of State's web site at www.state.nd.us/sec.

###